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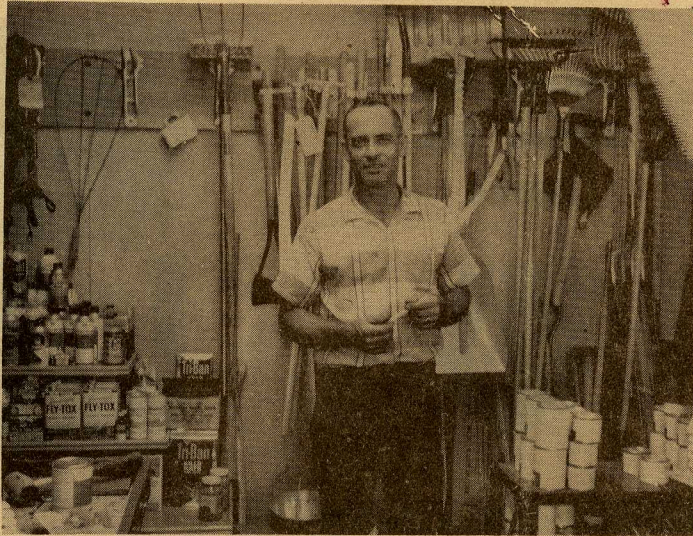
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"Our Salute to Harrison" September 1965

Newspaper

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Our Salute To Harrison



Ray De Vries of the Harrison Hardware.

The Douglas Lighthouse would like to report on the progress of our inland towns served by Douglas Electric Cooperative.

This issue will feature the town of Harrison which is reportedly the oldest living town in Douglas County.

Early in 1882 a group of homesteaders from around Orange City, Iowa decided to settle in the Western part of Douglas County. The Orange City community was so crowded and land prices so high that a group of families decided to move west. A Committee of three men, Frank LeCocq, Leendert Van Der Meer, and Dick Van Den Bos was appointed to select a place.

This settlement was first named New Orange City but was quickly changed to Harrison

named after Benjamin Harrison.

In 1882 their first church of sod was erected. In those days the town grew to include a general merchandising store, a blacksmith shop, a land office to help locate settlers, a drug store harness maker, hardware store The Harrison Globe, hotel, and of course, the inevitable livery stable.

In 1883 the First Reformed Church of Harrison erected a frame church building, still standing and used today. In 1884 the Christian Reformed Church of of Harrison erected its present building.

The railroad had been in the hopes and plans of Harrison but the railroad people had other ideas and the track extended to the north of Armour instead of heading on Northwest. In 1905 when Harrison was at its peak the population was about 275 people. By 1906 the population had dropped to 125. This was enough to kill most towns but the strength of the church and its people held it together.

The first electric service to Harrison was provided by Art Van Arendonk. Art started by serving the business places with a 32 volt plant in 1928. A year later he extended lines to the residences who wanted it. A wind charger 110 volt battery plant was large enough at first, then he had to add more and more motor generators to keep up with the growing needs.

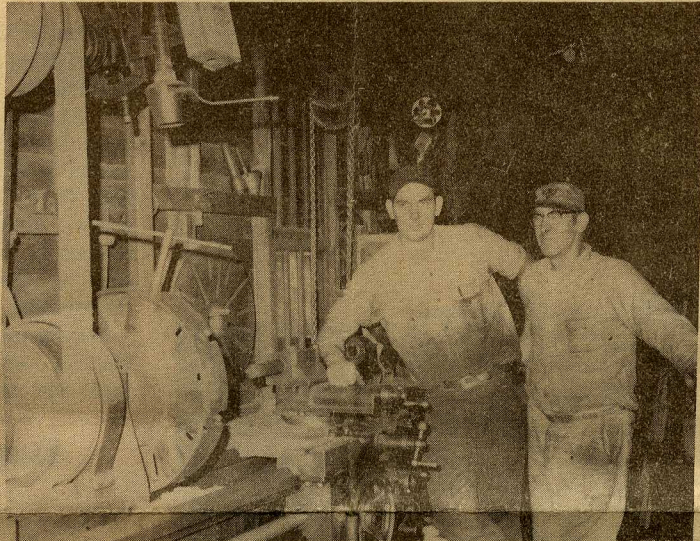
Art Van Arendonk is still in business in Harrison, not in the electric distribution business as Douglas Electric bought his business in 1949. His business is related, however, because he sells electric appliances, radios and television sets and services his merchandise.

He began his radio career by building some of the first radios to be sold in the community in the early 20's. He had never gone to radio school or even seen one, but built them from drawings. He said people would flip if they now had to pay for a radio what they used to pay. A radio in those days would cost anywhere from \$150 to \$300 including the B & A batteries. The batteries had to be charged every week and that would cost about \$1.00 to exchange your battery for charging.

He opened his store in 1926 and after the Douglas Electric Cooperative began serving the area in 1949 he added the appliances. In 1950 he sold the first TV to a man in Armour. Their only station was Omaha at that time and you could get that only once in awhile.

The town could have gone down again in 1955. Two of its life sustaining businesses burned to the ground. The grocery store now known as De Boer's Market and the Hardware Store owned at the time by John Starkenburg. The post office was also housed in the building, but again the community failed to die. With a great deal of help the building that burned in November was partially back in business by January of 1956.

De Boer's Market carries a complete line of groceries, some boys and mens shoes and work clothes. Their business may not



Le Roy DeWaard and John Hubers, Jr. by the big lathe.